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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2250  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE 1582  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL IMMEDIATE 7052  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000304

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKEY: PRESIDENT, PM, AND CHOD MEET IN EFFORT TO  
REDUCE TENSIONS

REF: A. ANKARA 300  
[1](#)B. ANKARA 294  
[1](#)C. ANKARA 288

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[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: President Gul, PM Erdogan, and CHOD Basbug met on February 25 in an effort to dispel tensions resulting from the February 22 detention of scores of active duty and retired military officials, including the former deputy CHOD and retired force commanders (refs a and b). Deputy PM Cicek disclosed to the media some of the atmospherics of his February 22 meeting at the Turkish General Staff. He dismissed rumors of the generals planning to resign en masse or threatening a coup and said the generals instead informed Cicek in advance of their extraordinary February 23 meeting and expressed their regret about the detentions. Cicek stressed that the government and the army are "on the same team" and that "the crisis will be overcome." According to media reports, former deputy CHOD Ergin Saygin, former Naval Forces Commander Ozden Ornek, and former Air Force Commander Ibrahim Firtina will be questioned today by the chief prosecutor. Retired VADM Ogutcu was formally arrested today together with four other military officers, including two active duty officers. The Istanbul Stock Market has fallen 7 percent since February 23, and financial analysts attribute this to rising political uncertainty resulting from the crisis in the judiciary and rising tensions following the wave of military detentions. End Summary.

"THREE-PARTY SUMMIT"  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) In an apparent effort to reduce tensions following the wave of arrests and detentions targeting senior retired and active duty officers, President Gul met with PM Erdogan and military chief General Basbug on February 25. The meeting, which included lunch, lasted for three hours. The President's office issued a short statement after the meeting: "In the meeting issues that have been debated in the public over the last couple of days were examined. In this regard, our citizens should rest assured that the issues on the agenda will be solved in accordance with constitutional order and our law." Press quoted PM Erdogan as stating the meeting went well.

DEPUTY PM CICEK: MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT ON SAME TEAM

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13. (SBU) According to daily "Hurriyet," Deputy PM Cicek provided the press some details of his February 22 meeting at the Turkish General Staff (TGS) headquarters. Cicek made clear that he took the initiative to go to the TGS and met with Deputy CHOD Aslan Guner for almost two hours, and also spoke with CHOD Basbug. Cicek rejected media speculation that the generals threatened to resign en masse or to conduct a coup, saying that he did not detect any hints of a move by the generals to resign in protest nor were there any indications of preparations for a military coup. He stated that such speculation was insulting for both the military and the government. The generals, instead, indicated their sadness over the arrests and expressed concerns about the need to do something to prevent "systematic attacks" against the military. Cicek stressed to reporters that the government and the military are on the same team and that "the crisis will be overcome."

MORE FORMALLY ARRESTED, COMMANDERS FACE QUESTIONING  
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14. (SBU) Multiple media sources reported that retired VADM Ali Feyyaz Ogutcu was formally arrested yesterday along with two other retired officers and two active duty officers. According to local press, 20 of those detained on February 22 have now been formally arrested, 15 of which are active duty officers. These include (in addition to ref A) Former Turkish Naval Forces Commander, Admiral (retired) Ozden Ornek, former Turkish Air Force Commander General (retired) Ibrahim Firtina, and former First Army Commander and former Deputy CHOD General (retired) Ergin Saygun reportedly will face questioning from the chief prosecutor today (February

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25). Former First Army Commander Cetin Dogan reportedly will be questioned on February 26.

BASBUG CANCELS TRIP TO EGYPT  
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15. (SBU) In response to the arrests of senior retired and active duty officers, Basbug has, according to media reports, cancelled his counterpart visit to Egypt, a trip that had originally been postponed. There are also reports that all generals have been ordered to stay in Ankara and to refrain from travel until further notice.

MARKET FALLS DUE TO "SLEDGEHAMMER" ARRESTS  
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16. (SBU) Milliyet newspaper noted that the Istanbul stock market has fallen 7 percent in three days. Financial analysts attribute the drop to rising political uncertainty surrounding the crisis in the judiciary (ref b), mounting tensions related to the arrests of senior military personnel, the possibility of another closure case against the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) (although the Chief Prosecutor indicated February 24 that he is not pursuing a closure investigation now), and the possibility of early elections.  
Jeffrey

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